

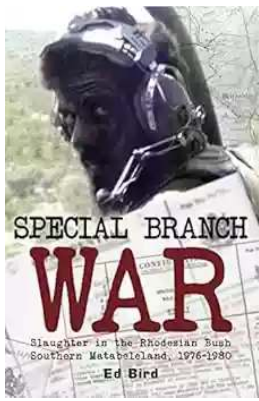
# **Slaughter In The Rhodesian Bush Southern Matabeleland 1976-1980: Unveiling the Hidden Massacre**

In the heart of Southern Africa, during the years 1976 to 1980, a merciless slaughter unfolded in the Rhodesian Bush. Known as the Gukurahundi, this dark chapter in history remains shrouded in secrecy even today. The systematic mass killings that occurred in Southern Matabeleland continue to haunt the collective memory of the Matabele people. This article aims to explore the horrifying events that unfolded during this time, shedding light on the untold stories and unveiling the hidden massacre that swept through the region.

## **The Genesis of the Massacre**

To understand the roots of the slaughter, we must delve into the complex history of Rhodesia. Founded by Cecil Rhodes in the late 19th century, the region was marked by racial tensions, with a minority white population controlling political power and suppressing the aspirations of the African majority. When Rhodesia declared independence from British rule in 1965, the stage was set for a bitter struggle for liberation.

In the late 1970s, the Rhodesian Bush War raged on between the white minority government and various guerrilla factions seeking to overthrow it. It was in this context that the Gukurahundi emerged as a brutal campaign by the majority Shona tribe against the minority Ndebele population, primarily residing in Southern Matabeleland. Under the leadership of Robert Mugabe and the ZANU-PF party, the Ndebele people were singled out and subjected to unimaginable violence.



## Special Branch War: Slaughter in the Rhodesian Bush. Southern Matabeleland, 1976-1980

by Ed Bird(Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.1 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 56821 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 615 pages



### The Massacres Unveiled

The Gukurahundi campaign involved widespread massacres, torture, and rape. Villages were raided, men executed, women violated, and children left orphaned. The Zimbabwe National Army, supported by the North Korean-trained Fifth Brigade, carried out these atrocities with impunity. The scale of the killings and the level of brutality employed were deeply disturbing.

However, the true extent of the slaughter remains unknown, as the events were heavily censored by the government. Journalists, human rights activists, and foreign observers were prohibited from entering the region, thus concealing the magnitude of the horrors taking place. It is estimated that thousands of innocent lives were lost during this dark period, leaving scars that may never fully heal.

### The Legacy of Fear and Silence

Even years after the massacres, a culture of fear and silence persists in Matabeleland. The survivors and witnesses of the Gukurahundi atrocities are haunted by the memories of their loved ones' brutal deaths and the pain they

endured. The oppressive environment created by the government still permeates the lives of many, making it difficult to openly discuss or seek justice for the horrors that took place.

## **Breaking the Silence**

Breaking the silence surrounding the Gukurahundi is crucial for healing and reconciliation. Efforts have been made by civil society organizations, activists, and survivors themselves to document the events and demand acknowledgement and justice. Through their bravery, stories are slowly emerging, shedding light on the untold narratives and ensuring that the memory of the victims is not forgotten.

It is imperative for the international community to support these efforts, to encourage transparent investigations, and to hold accountable those responsible for the atrocities committed. Only by confronting the past can Zimbabwe truly move towards a more inclusive and peaceful future.

The Gukurahundi massacres in Southern Matabeleland during the years 1976 to 1980 remain a dark stain on the history of Zimbabwe. The ruthless slaughter, carried out with impunity, scarred the region and its people. It is our collective responsibility to bring these hidden atrocities to the forefront, shine a light on the untold narratives, and ensure that the victims are never forgotten. By breaking the silence, we take a step toward healing and justice, reaffirming our commitment to a world free from violence and oppression.

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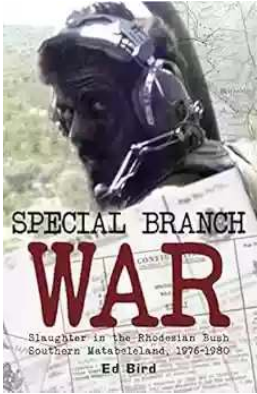
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This searing account primarily covers Ed Bird's Special Branch (SB) service in the Beitbridge area of southern Matabeleland, 1976-1980, encompassing Operations Repulse and Tangent of the bitter Rhodesian 'bush war'.

Joining the British South Africa Police (BSAP) in 1964, Bird cut his teeth on Selous Scouts 'pseudo' operations during Operation Hurricane in 1974-1976, so was well equipped to deal with the insidious escalation of the ZANLA and ZIPRA campaigns in the south of the country.

A meticulous recorder, Bird implemented and maintained the Beitbridge SB incident log, and it is this diary of terror and death upon which Bird's account hangs, interspersed with detailed accounts of fire fights, ambushes, landmine blasts, ZANLA executions, traitors and assassinations, SB 'dirty tricks' and 'turning' terrorists.

Although first and foremost an intelligence-gatherer, Bird thrived on combat and against all protocol inveigled his way onto Fire Force operations and as an air mobile MAG machine-gunner on converted Police Reserve Air Wing aircraft. Decorated for bravery but overlooked for promotion, Bird's BSAP career became victim to spurious political expedience.



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